

October 18, 1967

Dr. James L. Goddard,
Commissioner of Food and Drugs
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Food and Drug Administration
Washington, D. C. 20204

Dear Jim:

I am glad to detect the optimism that shows in your letter of October 9 with respect to finding the people you are looking for.

About LSD, I am no ^{less} more disturbed about newspaper reports than you are, and they are just not to be believed! That's one reason I have been provoked enough to write my own column where I have some control over what is attributed to me.

My mention of LSD was quite incidental to the main subject of my talk to the Genetics Society of America, but it was almost the only thing that got into the newspaper spreads.

What I did say was that the recent evidence concerning hazards of chromosome breakage made it more difficult than ever to condone the use of LSD, even experimentally, but to the extent that a considerable population was continuing to indulge in this practice it was still necessary to proceed with LSD research. It would be necessary, however, to take account of chromosome breakage and genetic damage in the indoctrination and selection of subjects for such experimental work. And it goes without saying that there should be close monitoring of such subjects with respect to chromosome effect.

The evidence on chromosome breakage is still not all that conclusive but what ought to be consistent in pointing out the hazards. There are plenty of them already with respect to the provocation of psychosis. A possible difference is that these may be more controllable by the use of expert supervision and it is unlikely that this would have much effect on chromosome damage!

I don't believe the newspaper reports bear much resemblance to the position I actually stated, but this is perhaps too complicated for a typical newspaper reporter to summarize briefly. I guess I'd better go into it more precisely in one of my own writings.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg,
Professor of Genetics

JL:as

GODDARD